

**THE BOOK INDUSTRY AND EDUCATION  
FOR ALL INITIATIVES IN NIGERIA**

**A KEY NOTE ADDRESS**

**BY**

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**AT**

**2<sup>ND</sup> NORTHERN ZONAL BOOK FAIR**  
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### Protocol

A book as is generally described, denotes a printed matter of at least 49 pages excluding the cover pages. It is bound together at one edge i.e. the spine. It has title page, preliminary pages, main content and back cover as part of the components. Books are said to have accelerated national development. As **AYODELE 2006** lucidly remarked “a book is the most effective means of liberating man from the shackles of ignorance is also an ultimate weapon of mass development”. Book is the most important change agent in the Social history of mankind. Consider the impact of Qur’an to the Muslims, the Bible to the Christians, and other revealed books to their civilization.

Books would remain for a very long time the primary means of communicating knowledge particularly in developing countries. Books are central in providing information, entertainment and education to millions of people through out the world. Despite the advent of new Information and Communication Technology for knowledge generation and distribution, such as internet and other computer-based innovations. Traditional books

and newspapers would remain the dominant primary source of information and the number of titles published continue to increase in geometric progression. Industry by definition, refers to an organized economic activity concerned with manufacturing, extraction and processing of raw materials in our case the raw materials is the book.

Educational attainment is organically interwoven with economic growth as such book industry is very critical to the initiatives of education for all. No meaningful educational enterprise can strive without instructional materials for which books are the most dominant.

Thus the themes of this year's 2<sup>nd</sup> Northern Zonal Book Fair is the most appropriate and is of central importance to intellectual, cultural and educational life of our nation, as development and dissemination of knowledge is a matter of utmost concern for any civilization.

Book publishing in Africa was said to have followed a set pattern at the earliest colonial period. When Colonial government set up book selling posts in host countries to sell educational books by importing all the books needed in that country. **SOLORIN 2007**, remarked that

*“however after independence, the need for relevant indigenous books both for educational and cultural value became imperative. Though attempts were made by Foreign Publishers to adapt, but the*



*economic difficulties in most African countries made it almost impossible. They therefore sold off their holdings and left”.*

Books are the oldest means of communication and the book industry and its technology dates back to Johannes Gutenberg’s invention of movable type in 1455.

Thus, the modern book industry is concerned with publishing and printing. While the publishing process coordinates the various processes needed to nurture from an idea in the mind of the author to a printed product available for distribution to the relevant audience. **ALTBATCH 2007** described this process “as the heart of coordination of multimedia of activities to produce books. That is dealing with selection, editing of manuscript, planning and supervising the process of transformation of the manuscript into book. The printing process on the other hand deals with sourcing the required materials, paper and ink quality, copyright laws, machineries and factory and production management.

The book industry is today facing a lot of challenges since 19<sup>th</sup> century. The changes in new technologies that transformed book processing and publishing, computer composing and printing, internet sales and marketing to mention but a few. Developing countries are yet to overcome

these challenges. Experience in the book industry in Nigeria reveals the following:

The book industry and its production for educational needs are still low and not rosy compared with developed countries. This fact is attributed to few but significant factors.

The price-sensitive nature of book trade. Publishers more often than not experience difficulty in charging economic price for their products especially when the long gestation period between conceptualization of a book product and adequate return is considered, financing every step in the book chain production becomes inescapably worrisome. This is so because the sale is unpredictable. Thus problem of mass production and distribution needed to be tackled roundly by all stake holders in the industry.

The paucity of needed instructional materials particularly those relevant for education for all initiatives.

*It has been estimated that 90% of published books are for primary and secondary education levels. This lopsidedness against tertiary education level must be addressed in order to strike a balance as more Research and Development activities are taking place at the tertiary level. Diversification and Specialization of knowledge is more pronounced at the*

*tertiary level. More books are needed for entrepreneurial education and skill acquisition programmes, in order to address Youth restiveness, reduce poverty and create wealth.*

The current level of book production for early education particularly for kindergarten is militate against availability of professional literature, reference books as well as general reading materials for life-long education.

### III. The book distribution network.

The cost of distribution of books is said to be enormous. Only a handful of publishers have warehouses or depots in the various parts of the country. With few or no vehicles for distribution. Thus reducing the capacity to promote and sell their own books nationwide. This in turn decreases their sales prospects and income generation. In addition, Publishers complain of prohibitive cost of vehicle maintenance on our bad Nigerian roads, coupled with occasional loss through road accidents.

### IV. Book industry is essentially private sector driven.

The book publishing industry is more or less a private sector affair in Nigeria. It is one of the most liberalized



industries. In addition, the vacuum created by the departure of foreign publishers could not be adequately filled by the indigenous publishers because of the enormous need for expertise and finance. The preponderance of printers was noticed particularly in Lagos and Ibadan.

In his opinion, **DANGANA 2007** remarked that “*Capital is needed to published books, the business is capital intensive because you need just more than your brain to be successful*”.

Most bookshops located in the cities or urban centres depend largely on importation to remain in business.

V. The issue of book piracy.

The first thing any publisher will mention especially in Nigeria as a major problem is piracy. **EMMANUEL 2007** pointed out that pirates no longer do backyard printing but take such materials to Asian countries on return, the pirated books may even look better than local ones. Pirated materials dominated some major markets in Nigeria without fear of challenge. In fact some dubious booksellers even engage in photocopying and binding of printed materials without due recognition to the copyright laws of the country.

In fact it is interesting to note that, there is a piracy issue of knowledge products including book between China and United States of America. Piracy therefore is an international issue requiring the attention of all stake holders in the book industry.

#### IV Duty charges for the book industry.

Publishing in Nigeria is still import dependent, we have to import everything from paper to ink and other consumable, if we really want quality products. All educational materials specifically those for the book industry should be duty free. If Nigeria could loose billions of Naira on unscrupulous import waivers to some unpatriotic Nigerians, why not on educational materials. The cost of production in the book industry is further confounded by erratic power supply, high cost of fuelling, alternative power source and machine maintenance. In fact it is belief of many publishers that it is cheaper to publish abroad than in Nigeria while actually the reverse is suppose to be the case.



## VII. The dearth of National book policy.

Nigeria is said to have neither a national book policy nor a national book development commission IKE 2007 says “*such a policy would garner support and direct the trend of our educational development and initiative for education for all*” It is high time we got this put in place if we are really serious.

## VIII. Limitation in imbibing a reading culture.

The book industry is also faced with limitation associated with reading culture in the country. Many Nigerians do not care about reading unless it is absolutely necessary talkless of acquiring books. Some would rather photocopy than to obtain the original copy. In addition Teachers and School authority do not help matters as they encourage students not to obtain original copy but encourage handout. It is therefore extremely difficult for publishing industry to strive where reading culture is low or non-existence.

## **Conclusion**

All these are but a few factors that militate against proper development of the book industry, consequently low volumes of books are produced for developing country's educational initiatives for all or for few.

The Indian model for the mass production of books for all our educational sector must be adopted without further delay.

The future of the book industry and the book itself is changing as books can now be read on-line through internet via a number of data bases and networks. Some books come along with their CD-ROM. All the same publishers must adapt to new realities, if they are to survive. Books would no doubt remain an important product and a central means of imparting knowledge and disseminating information. Contrary to the argument that it will become obsolete in an era dominated by ICT. Our developmental level has not reached that level yet. Therefore a very important avenue to showcase our book industry and our national intellectual output is a book fair like this. I call on the organizing committee to please keep the flag flying. As this is a worthwhile venture.

Thank you for listening and God bless all of us.